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# Leadership and Unit Effectiveness in Combat Infantry Platoons

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The Institute for Military Studies

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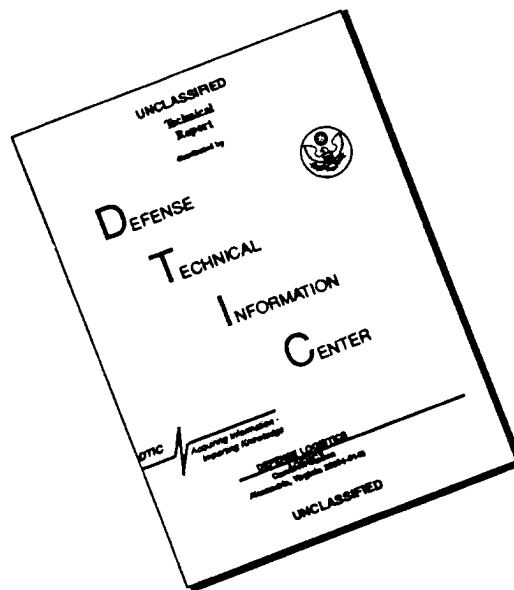


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# LEADERSHIP AND UNIT EFFECTIVENESS IN COMBAT INFANTRY PLATOONS

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# Leadership and Unit Effectiveness in Combat Infantry Platoons

## Introduction

### General

In a comparative study focusing on the cohesion levels of armies in different nations, Henderson emphasized that "... in building a cohesive army, leadership skills at company and lower-level units are the most critical and must be given priority" (Henderson, 1985, p. 109).

The practical translation of such a recommendation is expressed in the military organization in two ways: First, is the selection mechanisms by which the military attempts to screen the best potential for leadership and command. The second vehicle is the training and/or educational channels by which candidates are prepared for command and leadership positions. However, both of these vehicles require the definition(s) of the desired product - the lower-level unit leader.

Behavioral scientists, as well as military experts, have provided numerous definitions of leadership, each bearing on particular theoretical notions popular at a certain time and fancied by a certain definer. In a way, each definition reflects the way in which a particular author perceives leadership. (For reviews of trends in the study of leadership see Bass, 1981; House and Baetz, 1979; Yukl, 1981). Of great interest is Yukl's summary of the definitional issue: "...the operational definition of leadership

will depend to a great extent on the purpose of the researchers ... [but] .... leadership research should be designed to provide information relevant to the entire range of definitions, so that over time it will be possible to compare the utility of different conceptualizations and arrive at some consensus on the matter" (Yukl, 1981, p.5).

The orientation for leadership research advocated by Henderson (1985) for the study of face-to-face leadership that occurs in small military units, strongly suggests that meaningful contents of the leadership definition should be extracted from the participants of the interaction. This notion is compatible with Lord's argument that the basic-level category of leadership is its definition in conjunction with a specific context (Lord, Foti, De Vader, 1984). In general, this perceptual approach coincides with the recent developments in the field of social cognition (Wyer and Srull, 1986) and its reflections in the study of leadership (c.f Lord et al, 1984; Lord, Foti, & Phillips, 1982; Cronshaw & Lord 1982; Foti, Fraser & Lord, 1982; Fraser & Lord, 1984; Phillips, 1984). For example, Seers & Graen (1984) stated that leadership perception involve key interpersonal processes in organizations that impact on the formation of status and the development of superior-subordinate relations.

The perceptual approach to leadership may bear relevance to multiple issues in this domain (as required by Yukl, 1981), since it deals with several important factors.

First of all, this approach relates directly to the issue of leadership emergence. Hollander and Julian (1969), for example, argued that leaders emerged in group situations by fitting the shared conceptions of followers, emphasizing the role of the perceiver

constructs in leadership processes. According to Lord, De Vader and Alliger (1986) followers would allow others to lead them when those others matched followers idea of what good leaders should be.

Secondly, the perceptual approach was suggested by Borman (1987) as fruitful for improving performance appraisal of military personnel. Similarly, Cronshaw and Lord (1987) related this approach to improving the psychometrics of leadership.

Thirdly, and in line with the previous two points, the processes involved in the perception of the leader's behavior have an impact on the subsequent behaviors of the followers, such as type of compliance with leaders' command and overall effectiveness. Furthermore, as one accepts the parallelism between 'other perception' and 'self perception' (already introduced by Bem, 1972, and recently developed by Markus, 1977), the effects of perception may be apparent for the leader himself. In other words, the self perception of the commander in relation to an accepted prototype of leadership, may influence his initiatives within his unit.

The present study was designed to portray the internal structure of a meaningful concept in the military turf - the platoon commander. This was achieved by collecting self and others' reports about their perceptions of (their own and others') leadership at the junior level (i.e. platoon leaders), at various stages of their leadership development. These subjective reports are hence referred to as Implicit Perception of Leadership (IPL). Furthermore, by subsequently relating these IPLs to outcome variables, at the individual and the unit level, the study was also set to establish the construct validity of the platoon-leadership concept.



The present report summarizes one part of an on-going research on Israeli Infantry platoon leaders.

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) has traditionally put heavy emphasis on junior leaders, at the platoon and company level (c.f. Gal, 1986). Furthermore, since all Israeli officers come up through the ranks (and not through military academies), an underlying premise, especially in the combat arms, is that the commanding officer (or NCO) is the best soldier in his unit. This is particularly true at the lower-level units - squads, platoons and companies (Gal, 1986; Henderson, 1985). Another characteristic of Israeli junior leaders is the relative lack of formal distance between ranks, as well as between soldiers and their leaders.

Utilizing an Israeli sample of combat platoon leaders in this study, thus enables an unobstrusive examination of both the nature of the junior leadership perception, as well as its impact on individual and unit effectiveness.

The focus of this part of the study was on the attempt to outline the Implicit Perception of Leadership held by the platoon leaders themselves.

Practically, the above objective implied setting up an instrument that will represent the "true" elements of platoon leadership; Then, following the responses of the platoon leader, the main factors or dimensions of this leadership phenomenon will be analyzed.

## Leadership Components

Prior to delineating the method and the results of this part of the study, it is important to discuss the types of leadership dimensions that were applied in this study.

The research on the nature of leadership and leaders seems to fluctuate between two extreme poles: At the one end are the attempts to explore personality characteristics of the leader, e.g. traits, dispositions, abilities, etc. At the other extreme, and from different theoretical perspectives, the search is for the overt expression of leaderships, e.g. behavioral patterns, which are extracted from what the leaders do. As suggested, the preference of one pole over the other is strongly associated with the theoretical perspective one adheres to in the attempt to understand the entire process underlying leadership.

While we save the presentation of our own theoretical model to a later stage in this unfolding study, we are ready to claim at this point that the content of leadership consists of a mixture of constructs from the entire spectrum: from concrete behaviors to the abstract form of traits. In this regard we follow the footsteps of a relative early analysis of leadership by Hollander and Julian (1969), which is compatible with the famous publication of Heider (1958). Hollander's model highlighted the following factors as important in the process of acquiring leadership: the **MOTIVATION** of the person - i.e. the WANT; his **ABILITIES** - the CAN; and what he eventually DOES, e.g. his **BEHAVIORS** in the context of others. The **TRAITS** of the leaders, as we see them, are in many cases abstractions that people

use to summarize any or a combination of these three factors. Naturally the above three (or four, when one includes the traits) factors, or categories, may relate to different domains of leadership.

The most frequently mentioned domains of leadership (both as they appear in the relevant literature, and in the spontaneous expressions of soldiers during the conduct of our study, see later) are:

a. THE MISSION ORIENTED CONTENTS (labeled elsewhere as TASK ORIENTATION, INSTRUMENTAL DIMENSION, or INITIATION OF STRUCTURE).

b. THE GROUP ORIENTED CONTENTS (labeled elsewhere as GROUP MAINTENANCE, or CONSIDERATION).

In addition to these classic dimensions, we detected in our preliminary interviews (see later in the Method section) an additional content which is the EDUCATIONAL - VALUE TRANSMISSION content. This dimension reflects the expectation within the IDF that leaders will be the transmitters of society's and military's main values and norms, in order to substantiate the underlying ethos for fighting (Gal 1986).

While the hypothetical crossing of the four factors (motivation, ability, behaviors, and traits) with the three dimensions (mission, group maintenance and education) can serve as a

deductive model, our empirical orientation suggested to use it (at this stage) as a base line framework. In other words, rather than force a model on reality, use reality to shape our model.

Thus, the first phase of our study was to elicit (by open ended interviews) the spontaneous responses of infantry junior leaders towards platoon leadership. In other words, we wanted to use factors and contents of leadership that are salient in the minds of the relevant population and apply it to the investigation of the **existing** perceptual structures that the soldiers have on platoon leadership.

This basic empirical stage revealed several important points:

First, the "Factors X Dimensions" structure described above appeared to be very applicable in grouping the spontaneous responses which represent the perceptions of our target population.

Second, as one may have already guessed, the actual responses did not cover all the hypothetical combinations.

Thirdly, the responses served to refine the outline of the hypothetical structure.

The final grouping, or categorization, of the responses may be summed as follows:

A. The statements that dealt with the MOTIVATION factor were relatively global in nature. Two clusters, or sub-factors, were identified: (a) A sub-factor representing a general achievement motivation (not specific to the military context); (b) A sub-factor addressing specifically the motivation to succeed and advance in the

military setting. Since, the critical dimension of success in the IDF is linked to mission accomplishment we tended to associate these two sub-factors to the MISSION ORIENTED dimension.

B. All the contents that were raised in relation to the ABILITY FACTOR dealt with the MISSION ORIENTED dimension. Once again, we have found it useful to group the statements in two categories: One category represents the ability of the platoon leader as an individual infantry combatant. The other category illustrates the abilities of the officer to manage and lead the group to accomplish its missions.

C. The contents that expressed the BEHAVIOR FACTOR included statements that covered all the three dimensions: i.e. MISSION relevant, GROUP MAINTENANCE, and the EDUCATIONAL dimension.

D. A major content element that appeared in the soldiers' responses consisted of personality traits. These traits represented mainly dispositions relevant to the MISSION dimension.

E. Finally, the military reality expressed by the junior leadership suggested an additional factor to those presented by us - i.e. a SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION. This factor sums the elements that were suggested by our sample with regard to their perception of how well they lead their platoon, both in terms of mission accomplishment and in terms of group morale.

Finally, it is important to note that this mapping of the cognitive elements of platoon leadership was extracted from the responses of the platoon leaders themselves. It does not include items that may have theoretical relevance, but are not part of the cognitive structure of the officers.

The subsequent analyses attempt to explore the inter-relations of these factors and dimensions in order to help to clarify the essence of the the leadership construct as applied to junior military combat leaderships.

### Method

General: The project's design involved the assessment of Implicit Perception of Leadership (IPL) as reported by platoon leaders, at three stages along their career (towards the end of their cadet training; at the beginning of their assignment as platoon leaders; and after one year on the job). In addition to these self perceptions, the study included also IPLs of platoon leadership as reported by their super-ordinate and sub-ordinate role-partners (company commander and NCOs). Subsequently, parameters of self and unit effectiveness will be collected in order to investigate the linkage between components of leadership and platoon effectiveness.

Thus the study involved 351 infantry junior leaders with the following composition: 90 officer cadets; 91 newly commissioned and "mature" platoon leaders; 130 NCOs (squad leaders); and 40 company commanders. All of the subjects were required to outline the components of platoon leadership by responding to the Junior Leadership Questionnaire.

The present report covers the assessment and analysis of the components of leadership from the self-perspective of the platoon leaders. The subsequent reports will address the following issues:

- a. Developmental trends in the self-perception of platoon leaders. (In writing)
- b. The interactive consolidation of the platoon leadership concept as a function of the compatibility among the perceptions of the three role-partners. (In writing)
- c. The relationship between the leadership components and output (criteria) parameters, i.e. unit and personal effectiveness.

The division into these reports was done both for the sake of parsimonious presentation of the accumulated findings, and for methodological reasons. It should be noted that while the questionnaire's items administered to the different groups of subjects were similar in content, they were not totally identical. Hence, the present report (in accordance with the work-plan) covers the first sub-sample of platoon leaders responding with regard to their self perception as junior commanders.

Subjects: 91 platoon leaders officers of infantry combat units in the IDF responded to the Junior Leadership Questionnaire (JLQ). The majority (96%) of these platoon leaders were high-school graduates (12 years of education). Typically to the IDF, they were all conscripts, ranging in age between 20 to 21. Their tenure as platoon leaders ranged from one month to 36 months, with a median of 18 months on the job; Hence, they were either 2nd or 1st Lieutenants. Their median tenure in the military service was 36 months.

### Research Instrument:

Several steps were taken, prior to the final construction of the JLO, in order to draw spontaneous responses from military personnel concerning characteristics of infantry platoon leaders.

First, both senior investigators participated in a panel discussing the essence of junior military leadership. The panel which was organized by IDF's central leadership school (Beit Feldman), was composed of commanders of infantry bases, and staff members of the leadership school.

Secondly, spontaneous responses with regard to the perception of leadership were elicited from participants in the leadership school courses by our research assistants. The participants were composed of NCOs, platoon leaders and company commanders.

On the basis of these activities a tentative dimensionality was established and the core questionnaire was constructed.

Subsequently, a group of social psychologist graduate students, with infantry combat experience, evaluated the face validity of the questionnaires' items.

Following this preliminary step, the core questionnaire was administered to a group of 15 junior officers, at the premises of the "leadership school" for further validation. Ambiguous items were discarded.

The preliminary questionnaire included 71 items. Following item analysis the final JLO was comprised of 56 items. The items were of the Likert type with 5 points response scales.

Procedure: The questionnaire were administered individually by a graduate student with extensive military experience.



For administrative purposes the JLG was divided into 5 sections (Background information; Military skills; Behavioral patterns; Traits; Attitudes and values). The labels given to the questionnaire sections did not resemble the conceptual scales, to avoid subjects' biases.

Table 1 illustrates the structure of the questionnaire, the scales that were used in subsequent analyses and the ALPHA reliability coefficients of these scales.

Table 1.

The structure of the Junior Leadership Questionnaire

Questionnaire Sections	Scale	Number of original items	Final num. of items	Alpha coefficient	Corrected alpha *
Background	not applicable	15	15	n.a	n.a.
Military skills	Personal ability	10	9	.66	.70
	Command ability	8	6	.64	.76
Behavioral patterns	Mission related behaviors	2	2	.41	.79
	Group maintenance behaviors	9	8	.69	.75
	Value & educational behaviors	8	4	.76	.90
Traits	Traits	13	11	.76	.76
Attitudes & values	Military motivations	6	4	.66	.84
	Personal motivations	2	2	.48	.84
	Self and platoon evaluations	7	7	.77	.85

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\* The corrected ALPHA serves to adjust for the differences in scale size in the questionnaire. The technique was advocated by Guilford and Fruchter, 1973.

## Results

### Military Skills and abilities

The military abilities characterizing the leader were divided into two categories - both relevant to the MISSION dimension.

The first category (Personal ability) was composed of items relating to the subjects' self perception with regard their proficiency as combatants. The underlying premise of this dimension is that the platoon leader has to be the best fighter among the group. This requirement facilitates his role as a model for imitation, and supports his qualification to train his troops in these abilities. This category is expressed in the military both in the selection criteria of candidates for officers in the IDF, and in the proportion of time devoted to these skills during the cadets' training.

The nine items included in this scale pertained to the officers' self reports concerning their own ability to operate weapons (personal and support), their physical conditioning, navigation skills, endurance of physical hardship, marksmanship, etc. The corrected ALPHA coefficient of the scale was .70

The second category (Command ability) of this factor was composed of the set of abilities related to command and control skills of the platoon leader. The items in this dimension dealt with the officer's ability to deliver orders clearly, plan, maintain safety regulations, and his leading ability. The six items in this case revealed a corrected reliability coefficient - ALPHA of .76.

The correlation between the two ability categories was .42.

In both scales, the average ability level reported by the subjects exceeded the mid-score (3.00). The average self-perception with regard to ability as a combatant was 3.86 (S.D.=.36), and 3.88 was the average on the command ability scale (S.D.=.39).

### Motivation

As indicated before, the motivation factor of the questionnaire included items related to two type of contents: The first type (Military motivation) pertained to motivation (and somewhat of a commitment) with regard to the military service in general. The four items in this area dealt with the self-attributed importance to the role of a platoon commander and the desire to sustain a military career (i.e. sign-up for additional terms) in various functions. The corrected ALPHA for the four items was .84. The average score on this scale was 2.98 (S.D.=.76), which is just at the range of the mid-score of the scale (3.00).

The second type (Personal motivation) of motivation items in the questionnaire dealt with the subject's personal drive, as expressed in two items: Trying to do more than required, and the desire to assume higher responsibility than required (ROSH GADOL syndrome- see explanation in the translated questionnaire). The correlation between the two items was .31 and the corrected reliability coefficient was .84.

The average score for this general-personal motivation was 3.84

(S.D.=.50).

Its important to note that the Personal motivations score was significantly higher than the average score for the Military motivations ( $t(\text{pairs})= 2.56$   $p<.05$ )).

The correlation between the two motivation sub-categories was .32.

So far the two factors we have described dealt with internal qualities of the platoon leader, i.e. his abilities and his motivation. As we discussed above, another internal construct that was heavily utilized by our subjects to characterize junior leadership at the platoon level was personality traits.

### Traits

All of the personality traits solicited in the pretest phase of the research suggested the salience of task-oriented dispositions (e.g. reliability, thoroughness, perseverance, courage, responsibility, thrust, etc). The eleven items that were finally included in this scale yielded an ALPHA of .76.

The self-perception of the platoon leaders revealed a relatively favorable self-evaluation, as the mean score on this scale was 4.10.

## Behavioral Patterns

A total of fourteen self-report items pertaining to the behavioral patterns of the platoon leaders in dealing with their soldiers were comprised a-priori into three categories:

- a. Mission-related behaviors. (2 items, with a corrected ALPHA of .79).
- b. Group-maintenance behaviors. (8 items, with a corrected ALPHA of .75)
- c. Value & Educational behaviors. (4 items, with a corrected ALPHA of .90)

A varimax rotated factor analysis of the 14 items in this category confirmed the validity of these three factors. The loadings of the various items on the relevant factor exceeded .60.

The platoon leaders reported a higher level of Mission-related behaviors ( $\bar{M}=4.10$ ), than Group-Maintenance behaviors ( $\bar{M}=3.90$ ), and lastly Value & Educational activities ( $\bar{M}=3.34$ ).

## The Inter-relations Among the Factors

Thus far we described the empirical nature of the leadership constructs or elements that were extracted from the "Implicit Perceptions of Leadership" of the platoon commanders. (The IPL contained yet another factor, a subjective evaluation of the platoon leader. However, since this factor can be used as a criterion

variable, we defer the discussion on it to the end of our of the results section.)

The analysis conducted separately with each of the four factors (Ability and Skills; Motivation; Traits; and Behavioral Patterns) indicated the following points:

(1) The Military Skills and abilities salient to the platoon commanders are related to two domains of Mission-relevant dimension, i.e. skills as a combatant and as a group leader. It is interesting that our subjects did not mention as part of their IPL any skills related to the Group Maintenance dimension, nor to the Value-Educational dimension.

(2) The Motivation factor conveyed two aspects. The first, a general commitment to the military organization. The second, a personal aspiration for success.

(3) The Traits presented in the IPL were all Mission-related. The absence of human relation dispositions is of interest.

(4) Only within the factor of Behavioral Patterns other dimensions, beside the Mission-related one, were reflected. Furthermore, as one inspects the number of items related to each of the three content dimensions, it is obvious that the greatest number of items were mentioned with regard to the Group-maintenance dimension, while the smallest number of items were solicited in relation to the Mission-relevant dimension.

Following, are the inter-relationships of the IPL factors and dimensions as expressed in the inter-correlations matrix reported in Table 2.

Table 2

The Inter-Correlations of the JLQ Scales

(n=91; an asterisk indicates a non-significant correlation, otherwise correlations sig. at  $p < .05$ )

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
SKILLS	(1) Personal ability	1.00							
	(2) Command ability	.42	1.00						
MOTIVATION	(3) Military	.25	.04*	1.00					
	(4) Personal	.26	.33	.32	1.00				
TRAITS	(5) Traits	.62	.55	.15*	.58	1.00			
	(6) Mission related	.52	.35	.17*	.36	.59	1.00		
BEHAVIORAL	(7) Group maintenance	.35	.25	-.04*	.27	.49	.37	1.00	
PATTERNS	(8) Value & Educational	.25	.15*	.23	.39	.33	.18	.26	1.00

Behavioral Patterns: While the correlations between all three dimensions of the Behavioral Patterns are statistically significant and positive, their pattern discloses some differentiation in relationship: The highest correlation is between the Mission-related behaviors and Group-Maintenance ( $r=.37$ ), and the lowest correlation is between the Mission-related behaviors and the Value-Educational behavior ( $r=.18$ ). It is as if platoon commanders perceive leadership at this military level as the manifestation of strictly mission-and task-relevant behavior, while their expression of Group-Maintenance activities are applied only in second place. Within this context, value and educational behaviors are not totally ignored, yet they are distanced further away from the main core of the self-concept as platoon leaders. However it should be noted that the more a leader is

sensitive to the issue of Group-Maintenance, the more he exhibits Value-Educational behaviors ( $r=.26$ ).

Behavioral Patterns and Military Skills: As expected, the general finding is that the military skills are positively correlated with their overt manifestation - the behavioral patterns. Yet, it is important to detail these relationships.

The personal ability of the platoon leader as an individual combatant (e.g. physical conditioning, marksmanship, etc.) has the highest correlation (.52) with mission related behaviors (e.g. monitoring mission-linked performance). Lower correlations (but still positive) were found between Personal ability and Group-Maintenance behavior ( $r=.35$ ) and with Value & Educational behavior (.25). A similar pattern of correlations, but with lower values, was obtained between Command abilities of the platoon leader and his Behavioral Patterns: The highest correlation was between his Command ability and Mission-related behavior (.35), then with Group-Maintenance behavior (.25), and the lowest correlation (and not significant) was with Value & Educational behavior (.15).

Several points should be raised concerning these correlations:

First, the personal ability of the platoon leader has a stronger association with his overt behavior, than does his (self-perceived) command ability. It seems that the IDF's values of "Leading by personal example" and the "Follow me" dictum can serve as an explanation. Another explanation can rest on the fact that infantry platoons operate mostly within a larger unit (the company), hence, the platoon leader is relatively deprived of serious command and control functions, thereby cherishing more his personal abilities.

Second, while it is not surprising to find that the highest



correlations of the ability factor were with mission-related aspects of the behavioral pattern. their correlations with the Group-Maintenance behavior, and in one case with the Value-Educational behaviors, suggests that at the junior leadership level, self efficacy of the leader (being the best soldier in the unit) is assumed to ripple into other dimensions of leadership.

Thirdly, the lack of association between Command skill and Value & Educational behavior, in conjunction with the fact that this behavior received the lowest score among the behavioral pattern dimensions, suggest that this aspect is somewhat detached from the platoon leadership concept. (We shall return to this point following the outline of the Self-Evaluation data).

Behavioral Patterns and Motivation: We have already mentioned that the level of personal motivation or personal need for achievement was higher than the reported military motivation (or military commitment). At this stage we would like to highlight that the only dimension of the behavioral patterns that was positively and significantly associated with the military motivation was the Value & Educational behavior. In other words, the more committed is the platoon leader to the military as an organization and a way of life, the more does he exhibit Value & Educational behaviors, (e.g. "preached on the importance of the service"; "explained daily news"; etc.) However, this global commitment was not associated with his monitoring of task performance (Mission-related behavior), nor with his Group-Maintenance behavior. On the other hand, the personal motivation was positively correlated with all three behavioral dimensions of leadership (.36 with Mission-related behavior; .27 with

Group-Maintenance behavior; and .39 with Value & Educational behavior). The last two correlations indicate, that when a platoon leader has a high motivation to succeed and to assume greater personal responsibility he also invests in behaviors beyond those which are directly mission related (group maintenance and value & educational).

Behavioral Patterns and Traits: The personality traits that were incorporated in the IPL of our subjects were predominantly mission oriented. Hence, it was expected that the Trait factor would be associated most strongly with the Mission-related behavior. This was indeed confirmed, as the correlation between the two variables was .59. However, the higher the subjects attributed themselves with these traits, they also reported more occurrences of both group-maintenance behaviors ( $r=.49$ ), and more value & educational activities ( $r=.33$ ).

Traits, Motivations and Military Skills: An inspection of the inter correlations among the "internal constructs", i.e. traits, motivation, and military skills, reveals the following pattern:

The Traits (which were Mission relevant) had the highest inter-correlations with the other constructs: .62 and .55 with the Personal and Command abilities, respectively, and .58 with the Personal motivation. However, the traits were not associated with the Military motivation.

Both motivational clusters (military and personal) were linked to personal ability as a combatant (.25 and .26, respectively), however, only the personal motivation was correlated with command

ability ( $r=.33$ ).

Thus, it seems that the internal constructs, or qualities, of the junior military leader portray a general drive toward the military mission which includes personal abilities as a combatant and a strong need of achievement. These two elements are linked, in the perception of our platoon leaders, as task-oriented personality traits.

What is relatively left out of this schema is the military motivation or the commitment for military career, which may represent for our sample a value issue, and less an internal stable disposition. Is it a matter of being a conscript in a fully compulsory military service, or a methodological artifact - is still a question to be explored.

#### Interim Summary:

The IPLs extracted from the analysis of our respondents (91 infantry platoon leaders) suggest the following tentative schema of leadership:

The Israeli platoon leader's representations include both "Internal" qualities of the leaders, and his overt behavioral patterns. The internal qualities can be categorized in terms of two types of military skills (personal and command abilities), two types of motivations (general achievement, and military/organizational commitment), and a general factor of traits. The main theme of all the internal element is a mission-oriented and success-driven individual combatant.

The external - overt factor, i.e. the behavioral patterns, reveal the classical dimensions of leadership: mission and task

related behaviors, the human relations aspects of the group maintenance behavior, and finally a value-transmission and educational activity. However, the three dimensions are not equally important. The main feature again is the mission, and then come the rest. It is as if the other dimensions of behavior are perceived as a support to the main theme. The linkage between the internal element which is relatively focused on the three different parts of the behavioral pattern seems to be generated through the identification of the soldiers with the mission-related qualities of their leader.

While this proposition or schema is being currently tested within other parts of this study's framework, some additional insights can be obtained as we explore the data on the subjective evaluation of the leaders.

### Subjective Evaluations of Leadership

One other factor which has been extracted from the spontaneous responses of junior military leaders, and had been incorporated in the JLQ consisted of self perceptions of the platoon leaders with regard to how well they and their platoon perform.

Items in this scale included evaluations regarding troops' confidence in their platoon leader (i.e. myself), level of combat readiness, unit morale, etc.. The 7 items of this scale were easily integrated into one scale with a corrected ALPHA coefficient of .85. Table 3 presents the inter-correlations of both the composite score of the scale, and few of its single items with the preceding factors.

In the following paragraphs several of the findings are highlighted.

Table 3

The inter-correlations of subjective leadership evaluations  
with Military Skills, Motivation, Traits, and Behavioral Patterns.

(n=91; an asterix indicates a non-significant correlation, otherwise correlations sig. at  $p < .05$ )

	MILITARY SKILLS		MOTIVATION		TRAITS	BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS		
	Personal Ability	Command Ability	Military	Personal		Mission Oriented	Group Maint.	Value & Educat.
Soldiers trust me	.16*	.18	-.06*	.29	.36	.19	.23	-.01*
Soldiers will follow me	.18	.26	.04	.31	.43	.39	.26	.13*
Platoon ready for combat	.15*	.18	.16*	.12*	.13*	.13*	.26	.36
Platoon's morale	.23	.19	.00*	.15*	.29	.29	.32	.26
Composite Evaluation Score	.29	.23	.18	.27	.37	.29	.31	.18

A major aspect of self-perception of leadership concerns the issue of whether the designated followers will follow the leader. While this question may have an observable answer, it may still remain an open question within the subjective evaluation of the leader.

In a way, the relations of the preceding internal and external factors of leadership to this aspect may shed more light on the internal structuring of the IPL.

The present findings indicate that the platoon leader perceives his Traits (mission related traits) as the main factor associated both with the trust he elicits among his soldiers ( $r=.36$ ), and with his belief that the soldiers will follow him ( $r=.43$ ). Other factors that are predominantly associated with these two evaluations are the Personal Motivation of the leader, and the leader's Mission-related Behavior (.27 and .29, respectively).

It should be noted that with regard to their overt behaviors our subjects attributed relatively low importance to their Value & Educational activities as contributing to the trust their soldiers have towards them, or to the extent their soldiers will follow them. Furthermore, the subjects' responses suggest only weak linkage between their military motivation and the above mentioned aspects.

A different picture emerged concerning the perceptions of these junior commanders with regard to the readiness of their platoon for combat. Congruent with the conceptualization made by Blades (1986), when it comes to questions of unit effectiveness, the leaders do understand that the phenomenon is complex and can not be attributed only to their qualities. Interestingly, the strongest association in this case are with their educational behavior ( $r=.36$ ), and with their group-maintenance activities ( $r=.26$ ). These findings call into mind propositions made by numerous authors about the importance of values and group cohesion when it comes to combat readiness (e.g. Henderson, 1985; Gal, 1986).

The platoon's level of morale was perceived, as expected, to be associated most strongly with all three dimensions (Mission, Group-Maintenance, and Value-Educational) of the leader's Behavioral Patterns (.29, .32. and .26, respectively), as well as with the leaders' perceived traits (.29). No significant relationship was found between perceived unit morale and the leader's (personal or military) motivation.

Finally, the Composite Evaluation Score (an average score of the 7 items of this scale) reflects linkages to all of the leadership factors and dimensions. Thus, suggesting the relationships of all of the components of unit effectiveness to the global schema of leadership.

### RECAPITULATION

The present report should be perceived as the first step in a series of unfolding studies directed to investigate the military's junior leadership phenomenon.

Rather than employing a specific model of leadership this study focused on the spontaneous implicit perceptions of leadership held by infantry platoon leaders in the IDF.

These spontaneous perception revealed a multi-factorial and a multi-dimensional construct of leadership that was utilized to construct the Junior Leadership Questionnaire.

The hypothetical grid of the five factors (e.g. Military Skills and Abilities; Motivation; Personality Traits, Behavioral Patterns and Subjective Evaluation) and the three dimensions (e.g. Mission-related aspects; Group Maintenance; and Value & Educational aspects) was not fully represented (in all of its 15 compassable cells) by our subjects' responses. While some may identify it as shortcoming of the questionnaire, we felt that the existing scales of the questionnaire represented these elements of leadership that were meaningful and salient to the research population.

The statistical analysis was aimed, on the one hand, to refine the questionnaire and to establish the reliability and consistency of its scales. On the other hand, the analyses were applied to probe into the inter-relations among the various components of leadership.

a. The dominance of the mission-related aspect of military leadership. The junior leaders who comprised our sample realize that they are in the army to do a job, to perform combat missions and to accomplish their missions. Indeed, this is a major dimension along all the factors of the questionnaire. When they refer to their abilities, traits, motivations and/or behaviors - the mission related aspect is the predominant one. While the platoon leader reports activities related also to other dimensions, i.e. group maintenance or educational, still the nature of inter-correlations suggests that these activities are done in service of the mission.

b. The importance of traits as a leadership factor. While we do not intend to rekindle the old debate of situational vs. personal impact on leadership, our data clearly suggests that the leaders themselves prefer to use TRAITS as a major construct of their



qualities. In line with the previous point the traits they reportedly employed were comprised of mission-related traits; That is, traits representing a motivational thrust to succeed coupled with task-relevant abilities.

c. The personal vs. organization reflection of leadership. Of interest are two findings revealed in this study. The data suggests, first, the greater meaningfulness of personal combat proficiency of the junior leader over his command and control capability, within the general construct of platoon leadership. The second interesting finding in this context is the higher significance of personal motivation in comparison to military motivation, or organizational commitment. In a sense, the leadership profile that is portrayed by our platoon leaders suggests a "self accomplishment" type of drive coupled with personal combat proficiency on the critical mission-related dimension (e.g. personal ability), as the ideal profile for soldiers to follow (by example, through identification, etc.).

d. Reflective leadership. Another important point with regard to the IPL is that the platoon leaders tend to include as part of their leadership perception a subjective evaluation component about themselves as well as their troops - similar to a feedback mechanism.

All the above points still require refinement and external validation within the framework of the full scale study, since at this stage they only represent the leadership phenomenon from the leaders own perspective.

Subsequent report (currently in writing) will introduce the concepts held by the role partners of the platoon leaders (e.g. squad leaders and company commanders). Finally and critically, in order to be able to apply effectively the results of this research (for training and assessment), it is essential to establish the linkage between the components of the leadership phenomenon and objective measures of unit and personal effectiveness.

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